IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the first paragraph on page 1 of the specification as filed (see lines 7-9 on page 1) with the amended first paragraph on page 1 of the specification, which is set forth below. (Appendix A, which is enclosed herewith, shows how the first paragraph on page 1 of the specification as filed was amended to produce the amended first paragraph on page 1 of the specification.)

now U.S. Pat. No. 6,466,570

This is a divisional of co-pending U.S. Serial No. 09/077,795, filed on June 5, 1998, which is the U.S. National Stage Application of PCT International Application No. PCT/GB96/03055, filed on 11 December 1996. The present invention relates to methods and apparatus for accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string.

Please amend pages 16-18 of the specification as filed with amended pages 16-18 of the specification, which are set forth below. (Appendix A, which is enclosed herewith, shows how pages 16-18 of the specification as filed were amended to produce amended pages 16-18 of the specification.)

Internet calling party on the progress of call set to the destination telephone over the PSTN local to that telephone; this feedback need only be in terms of whether or not the call has succeeded.

According to the present invention, there is provided a method of accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) - storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

(b) - applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name;

(c) - supplying the domain name formed in step (b) to the DNS to retrieve the URI held in the corresponding said record; and

(d) - using the URI retrieved in step (c) to access said communication data.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) - storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an at least part-formed URL, including access

scheme and host name, of an item of communications data, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

(b) - applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; and

(c) - supplying the domain name formed in step (b) to the DNS to retrieve the at least part-formed URL held in the corresponding said record;

(d) - using the at least part-formed URL retrieved in step (c) to access said communication data.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of discovering communications endpoint address data for contacting a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) - storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URL of a resource that has access to multiple items of communications endpoint address data, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name, the number strings being in telephone-number form.;

(b) - applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; and

(c) - supplying the domain name formed in step (b) to the DNS to retrieve the URL held in the corresponding said record;

(d) - using the URL to access the corresponding said resource and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications endpoint address data, this data then being returned by the resource.

According to a still further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of

accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) - storing in a DNS-type database system, records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

(b) - applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; and

(c) - supplying the domain name formed in step (b) to the DNS-type database system to retrieve the URI held in the corresponding said record;

(d) - using the URI retrieved in step (c) to access said communication data.

The present invention also encompasses clients-focused methods corresponding to the above overall methods of the invention, and apparatus for implementing aspects of the methods of the invention.